

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 IO-13 /072 W  
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P 211209Z DEC 77  
FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1866  
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY  
AMCONSUL OPORTO  
COMUSFORAZ  
USCINCEUR  
CINCLANT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PONTA DELGADA 0552

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, PO  
SUBJECT: AZOREAN MINISTER DISCUSSES HIS TRANSFER , THE GOVERNMENT  
CRISES AND SEPARATISM

REF: LISBON 9557(NOTAL)

SUMMARY: DURING A PRIVATE CONVERSATION DECEMBER 15, MINISTER OF  
THE REPUBLIC FOR THE AZORES GENERAL GALVAO DE FIGUEREIDO EXPRESSED  
SATISFACTION AT HIS IMPENDING DEPARTURE FROM THE REGION, RELIEF  
THAT PCP FAILURE TO BACK THE SOARES GOVERNMENT'S CONFIDENCE  
MOTION HAD DEPRIVED AZOREAN SEPARATISTS OF A PRETEXT TO PRESS FOR  
INDEPENDENCE BUT CONCERN THAT THE REGIONAL GOVERNMENT WAS  
"RIDDLED" WITH SEPARATISTS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE TRANSFER: GENERAL GALVAO DE FIGUEREIDO CONFIRMED PRESS  
REPORTS THAT HE WOULD BE LEAVING THE AZORES TO BECOME PRESIDENT  
OF THE SUPREME MILITARY TRIBUNAL. HOWEVER, HE EXPECTED TO REMAIN  
IN THE REGION FOR AT LEAST SIX TO EIGHT WEEKS UNTIL A NEW GOVERNMENT  
HAD BEEN FORMED AND HIS SUCCESSOR NAMED. HE CLAIMED TO BE  
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UNAWARE OF ANY CANDIDATES FOR HIS JOB. ALTHOUGH HE IN FACT HAD BEEN  
TAPPED FOR THE AZORES POST BY PRESIDENT EANES WHO ONLY THEN SOUGHT  
MARIO SOARES' APPROVAL, HE NOTED THAT THE CONSTITUTION FORMALLY  
REQUIRED THAT THE MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC BE PROPOSED FIRST BY THE  
PRIME MINISTER AND NOMINATED BY THE PRESIDENT.

2. REFLECTIONS: THE MINISTER WAS VERY PLEASED WITH HIS NEW

ASSIGNMENT WHICH CARRIES A PROMOTION TO FOUR STAR GENERAL AND, CONSEQUENTLY, POSTPONES HIS MANDATORY RETIREMENT FROM THE ARMY, SCHEDULED FOR JULY OF THIS YEAR, FOR FOUR MORE YEARS. HE VOICED SATISFACTION AT BEING ALLOWED TO TERMINATE HIS TOUR IN THE AZORES AFTER SIXTEEN MONTHS WHERE, HE ADMITTED, LIFE HAD NOT ALWAYS BEEN PLEASANT FOR HIM. REFERRING TO HIS CONSTANT FRICTIONS WITH THE AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT (RGA), HE READILY VOLUNTEERED THAT HE HAD OUTLIVED HIS USEFULNESS HERE AND THAT A CHANGE WOULD BE SALUTARY FOR ALL CONCERNED.

3. GOP GOVERNMENT CRISIS AND AZOREAN SEPARATISM: GALVAO DE FIGUEIREDO EXPRESSED GREAT RELIEF THAT THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY(PCP) HAD RESOLVED NOT TO BACK MARIO SOARES TO SAVE HIS GOVERNMENT. AT THE SAME TIME HE PRAISED SOARES FOR REFUSING CONCESSIONS TO THE PCP IN EXCHANGE FOR THE PARTY'S PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT IN THE CONFIDENCE VOTE. HE SPECULATED THAT IF EVEN A TEMPORARY ALLIANCE OF THE LEFT HAD MATERIALIZED, THE EFFECT IN THE AZORES COULD HAVE BEEN EXPLOSIVE. HE ALLEGED THAT THE PSD CONTROLLED

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PONTA DELGADA 0552

AZOREAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT WAS RIDDLED WITH SEPARATISTS WHO MIGHT HAVE SEIZED ON A MOMENTARY LEFTWARD TURN IN LISBON TO PRESS FOR INDEPENDENCE FOR THE ARCHIPELAGO. WHILE INSISTING THAT MOST AZOREANS HAVE LITTLE USE FOR THE SEPARATISTS, HE SAID THE FERVENT ANTI-COMMUNIST SENTIMENTS OF THE POPULACE COULD HAVE BEEN PLAYED UPON BY SEPARATISTS TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR THEIR CAUSE. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, HE ASSERTED THAT THE MOST OUTSPOKEN OF THE SEPARATISTS

IN THE RGA WAS AMERICO NATALINO VIVEIROS, REGIONAL COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY SECRETARY AND FORMER PSD NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEPUTY. HE ALSO JUDGED RGA PRESIDENT JOAO BOSCO MOTA AMARAL A SEPARATIST AT HEART ALTHOUGH, THE MINISTER SAID, MOTA AMARAL MASKED HIS TRUE COLORS BENEATH A MORE MODERATE DEMEANOR.

4. COMMENT: GENERAL GALVAO DE FIGUEREIDO EPITOMIZED WHAT MANY AZOREANS VIEW AS THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S HISTORIC INSENSITIVITY AND INDIFFERENCE TO THE REGION. HIS HEAVY-HANDED APPROACH TO HIS MISSION AS REPRESENTATIVE OF PORTUGUESE SOVEREIGNTY WON HIM FEW FRIENDS AND BROUGHT HIM ALMOST TOTAL SOCIAL ISOLATION. FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE PSD CONTROLLED REGIONAL GOVERNMENT, WHO TO A MAN PERCEIVED

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THE MINISTER AS A MAJOR IMPEDIMENT TO, RATHER THAN FACILITATOR OF, COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, HIS TRANSFER CLEARLY REMOVES AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF RGA/GOP FRICTION.

5. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE, HOWEVER, TO ASSUME THAT HIS DEPARTURE, ASSUMING HIS SUBSTITUTION BY A MORE AMENABLE AND TACTFUL SUCCESSOR, WILL IN AND OF ITSELF PRODUCE A DRAMATIC SHIFT IN GOP/RGA RELATIONS. THE ISSUES INVOLVED TRANSCEND THE PERSONALITY OF ONE MAN. FUNDAMENTAL DISAGREEMENTS OVER THE SHAPE AND LIMITS OF AUTONOMY APPEAR DESTINED TO PERSIST SO LONG AS THE SOCIALIST PARTY, PERCEIVED BY THE RGA AS ANTAGONISTIC TO MEANINGFUL AND AMPLE AUTONOMY, RETAINS THE PRINCIPAL ROLE IN DETERMINING CENTRAL GOVERNMENT POLICY TOWARD THE REGION. MOREOVER, THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT EVEN A PSD DOMINATED NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COULD AVOID SOME CONFLICT WITH THE REGION ON THE AUTONOMY QUESTION.

6. THE MINISTER'S ALLEGATION THAT THE SENTIMENTS OF THE RGA MEMBERS ARE BASICALLY SEPARATIST IS INTERESTING, AND CANNOT BE WRITTEN OFF TOTALLY TO PARANOIA CAUSED BY HIS PERSISTENT HARASSMENT FROM THE AZOREAN LIBERATION FRONT (FLA). IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION, FOR EXAMPLE, SEVERAL RGA SECRETARIES, INCLUDING AMERICO NATALINO VIVEIROS HAVE NOT CONCEALED THEIR BELIEF THAT WERE THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT NOT TO CONCEDE MEANINGFUL AUTONOMY FOR THE REGION, THEY WOULD FAVOR INDEPENDENCE, EITHER NOW OR WHEN THE ARCHIPELAGO BECOMES MORE ECONOMICALLY SELF-SUFFICIENT. MOTA AMARAL IS ONE RGA OFFICIAL TO KEEP TO HIMSELF HIS TRUE FEELINGS ON THE SUBJECT. HOWEVER, IT IS PERHAPS NOTEWORTHY THAT BOTH GALVAO DE FIGUEREIDO AND HIS NEMESIS, FLA LEADER JOSE DE ALMEIDA, CLAIM THAT DEEP INSIDE MOTA AMARAL FAVORS EVENTUAL INDEPENDENCE FOR THE REGION.

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